

NO [unclear]
Lieutenant General Don Jorge Rafael Videla
President of the Republic of Argentina

8/24/76 R

CU004

Mr. President:

Within a few hours, I will take refuge in the Embassy of a democratic country, whose government respects the standards of conduct which guide civilized nations. Before I do, I feel obliged to write you this letter. I do not know if you will read it, but I think you would find it useful to do so.

Almost three years ago, as a result of political events in Uruguay, three Uruguayans—Hector Gutierrez Ruiz, Zelmar Michelini and I—entrusted our safety and that of our families to the protection of the Argentine flag; so did thousands of our fellow countrymen. Since we placed our trust in the nation itself, it mattered little to us then or afterwards what government or political party was in power in your country. It had always been this way. When we—I speak in the name of my murdered countrymen—were part of the Uruguayan government, we accepted in our country Argentine refugees of all political and social sectors, never asking them what their affiliation was; they were Argentines, and that was sufficient. Christians and marxists, civilians and soldiers; members of the Radical Party in 1930; opponents of Peron during the 1950s; supporters of Peron from 1955 on; then once more his opponents—all were welcomed and protected in a spirit of brotherly solidarity. In welcoming them, we did not only follow the dictates of our honor; had we wished to do otherwise, we would have been opposed by the entire country, acting in accordance with a deeply ingrained national tradition.

Always—throughout the entire history of our existence as an independent nation—Argentina has offered the same hospitality to those Uruguayans who have been driven from their own country by political upheavals.

The reason for all this is a simple one: both of our nations have always paid tribute to the highest values of human solidarity. When guests are sacred even among animals; when common decency and self-respect demand that we respect and defend those whom we welcome into our homes, how could Argentines and Uruguayans have behaved less honorably? Thank God, throughout all of our history, hospitality has been considered sacred in both countries of the River Plate.

Hector Gutierrez is the Speaker of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies. He represents the National Party there and continues to do so, no matter what has been decreed in Montevideo by individuals who feed upon rotting flesh like certain loathsome animals. (Only members of the National Party—Blancos, as we Uruguayans call them—can decide who becomes or ceases to be a party member; enemies of the party or of the nation have no such authority.) He was 43 years old, and the head of a wonderful Christian family; he had a wife and five children. Since 1973, all of them had lived in Buenos Aires.

Zelmar Michelini is the father of ten children; since 1973, he too worked from sunrise to sunset here in Buenos Aires to support his wife and his younger children, and to help the older ones—all of them, still very young. As a Deputy, a Minister, a Senator, he always belonged to a different political party than did Gutierrez Ruiz and I. But he was immensely respected by all of us, and for many years he has been one of our dearest friends.

I have spent my entire life in politics, Mr. President, close to these men: one sat at my side; the other sat opposite me. But we never disagreed about the need to struggle against all forms of unjust violence, of whatever origin, and to preserve

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

80F178

21/185

the freedom and dignity of all human beings. I am certain that if the three of us were obliged to live outside of our country, it was precisely because those who rule Uruguay today are determined to eradicate the violence of others, but to extend their own violence to horrifying extremes.

Mr. President, I will not recount the tragic circumstances surrounding the murder of the two countrymen of whom I speak: I know that your Excellency is perfectly familiar with those circumstances, because they have been publicized by a few newspapers; because they were denounced to you by the two widows at a time when, as we now know, their husbands were still alive; because your Press Office issued a communiqué which expressed the concern of the Executive Branch at what was euphemistically referred to as the "disappearance of journalists" and made public your intention to undertake an exhaustive investigation of the facts. After their bodies were found, the same concern and the same intention to investigate were reiterated by the same parties.

These are the facts which you, Mr. President, have the right and the obligation to know:

The abduction of Don Hector Gutierrez Ruiz, Speaker of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies, was carried out in the early hours of May 18, at his residence located at Posadas 1011 (near the corner of Carlos Pellegrini) by a sizeable group of heavily armed individuals, who acted publicly, deliberately and in a disciplined manner. They arrived in several white Ford Falcon sedans, identical with those used by the Federal Police; from their cars, they communicated back and forth by radio—at full volume—with the central headquarters from which they received their instructions. At the same time, the actual abductors and those who remained below shouted back and forth from the fourth floor of the building to the street in order to keep everyone informed of the progress of the "operation".

The abductors remained for a full hour at the home of Gutierrez Ruiz; after handcuffing him and overcoming his wife and his five small children at gunpoint, they proceeded to sack the apartment thoroughly and methodically. Paying scant attention to books, letters, documents, they took only objects of value, money and—perhaps they too have children—the comic books of the little ones.

At no time during the abduction of Gutierrez Ruiz did any police officers from the nearby precinct appear, even though the commotion caused considerable alarm throughout the neighborhood and among passers-by. The Embassies of Brazil, France, Rumania, and Israel are all located within 150 meters of the building; some are a good deal closer and all are heavily and permanently guarded. None of the guards stationed at any of these Embassies intervened either. The abductors entered the building, not through an inconspicuous doorway marked with the number 1011, but through the main door which is located at the corner of Pasaje Beaver. That door faces the entrance of another building which is also permanently guarded, because it contains the residences of the Brazilian military attaché and Dr. Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo. The guards on duty there intervened briefly but withdrew when the abductors flashed credentials identifying themselves as members of the police and the Armed Forces, who—they claimed—were carrying out "joint operations". Hector Gutierrez was taken from his home only half-dressed, handcuffed, with a pillowcase over his head; he was pushed, shoved and otherwise rudely treated. His abductors acted without haste, showing no signs of nervousness; upon leaving they again used the better lighted, more visible main door through which they had entered, rather than the less conspicuous door which this time was closest to them—directly opposite them, in fact, as they left the elevator. They made off with their victim and their meagre booty, without any interference from representatives of the so-called "forces of order".

The abduction of Senator Michelini was carried out two hours after the events just described. We must assume that it was carried out by the same individuals who kidnapped Gutierrez Ruiz, or by others receiving identical orders; for the abductors had warned Mrs. Gutierrez not to notify "Michelini and the other Uruguayans" if she did not want them to kill her husband. To make sure that she would not do so, they pulled the telephone out of the wall; but they did not hurry as might have been expected, had they had any reason to fear that they would be pursued, or that Mrs. Gutierrez Ruiz would find a way to sound the alarm. In other words, the abductors behaved as though they had nothing to fear from military or police personnel that might be waiting for them at the Hotel Liberty, as well might have occurred.

The Hotel Liberty, from which Senator Michelini was abducted, is located on Corrientes, near the corner of Florida; that corner is the Times Square or the Piccadilly Circus of Buenos Aires. Across the street and one block away, at the corner of Corrientes and Maipú, is what is perhaps the best guarded public building in the city: the central offices of ENTEL, the state-owned telephone company, which house the most important internal and external communications network in the Argentine Republic. Anyone entering that building must show identification and be frisked by military sentinels armed with machine guns. In the same block, facing Sarmiento street, is the US Embassy, which is heavily guarded day and night; at least two vehicles with heavily armed personnel are parked in front of the Embassy at all times. In spite of all this, the abductors once again acted publicly, with incredible display and total assuredness; they were in no hurry, nor did they seem at all anxious to be secretive. They parked their vehicles in an illegal manner, occupied the front of the hotel and the well-lit lobby in military fashion, threatened all of the hotel personnel at gunpoint, obtained the keys to Senator Michelini's room, made the elevator operator take them upstairs. After entering Senator Michelini's room and forcibly overcoming the two sons who were with him, they made the Senator get up and dress, and they blindfolded him. But they did not go back downstairs immediately; instead, they once more sacked the room systematically, throwing everything they could find into piles and tying them up in the bedsheets. They allowed Senator Michelini to go to the bathroom, and to fetch the medication which he took habitually. Finally, they took the wrist-watches of Senator Michelini's sons from them. Only then did they leave, shouting death threats, and again, making no effort to be secretive.

All of this commotion took place right across the street from where the military guard on duty at ENTEL were stationed. If none of the guards intervened when they saw that group of individuals armed with pistols, machine guns and Ithaca shotguns, they can only have refrained from doing so because they knew that the abductors were military or police personnel acting under orders. In such cases and in such times as these, military contingents act on the basis of certainties, not "just in case". Were this not so, the subversive organizations would have won out a long time ago. But these are the facts: for four hours on the morning of May 18, a large, well-armed gang of kidnappers and thugs was in command of downtown Buenos Aires. For four hours they rode around the downtown area, committing excesses, kidnapping prominent citizens of a neighboring country, sacking homes, occupying major hotels at gunpoint, shouting insults and threats; no member of the police or the armed forces bothered to intervene, or to inform his superiors of these events.

For an hour, the Gutierrez Ruiz family looked on in terror as, in the presence of their bound and hooded husband and father, the apartment was sacked. They therefore saw which objects the thieves took with them, and which objects they rejected after touching them with their hands. None of the assailants wore gloves; they left their fingerprints all over the apartment. Some very clear fingerprints were left in places not ordinarily touched by human hands, for example, on pictures covered

with glass and hung at a considerable height; after touching these pictures several times, the assailants threw them on the floor. They left the same profusion of fingerprints in the rooms of Senator Michelini, once again exhibiting the assuredness of individuals who knew they were acting with total impunity.

On the evening of May 20 (less than 48 hours after these events occurred) the Argentine Minister of Defense stated in separate conversations with two foreign correspondents that this was a "Uruguayan operation"; I must make it clear that at this point, the perpetrators were not Uruguayans. We have been categorically assured of this by Mrs. Gutierrez Ruiz, the two sons of Senator Michelini who were present at the abduction of their father, and the personnel who were on duty at the Hotel Liberty; these witnesses noted the absence in the speech of the abductors of expressions and linguistic idiosyncrasies characteristic of the Spanish spoken in Uruguay, as well as their ignorance of certain historical facts (for example, who Aparicio Saravia was) inconceivable for any Uruguayan. Thus, I am certain that when he referred to a "Uruguayan operation", the Minister of Defense must have meant an "operation for which the plans or orders came from Uruguay."

The families of both victims tried immediately to lodge an official complaint before the proper authorities, in order to find out where their loved ones might have been taken. This was a logical reaction for relatives who, faced with what they took to be an official action, were eager to take whatever measures would secure the prompt release of the prisoners. What is incomprehensible is that the authorities should have required an official complaint; even if they were not responsible for the events in question, those events involved very serious crimes, committed in the indifferent presence of numerous authorities—crimes which caused public alarm and—within a matter of hours—deep concern all over the world. Democratic organizations from a variety of countries, public figures of all nationalities, His Holiness the Pope and numerous governments (among which that of their own country was, of course, not to be found) made every possible effort to obtain the release of the victims. But the Argentine government declared that "in certain cases official complaints have not been lodged with the Federal Police". That is not true: there were complaints, but the police refused to receive them. Immediately after the first friends arrived at her house, Mrs. Gutierrez Ruiz appeared at the nearby police precinct, located at Suipacha 1156; there she was categorically refused permission to lodge a complaint, because—as she was told—"that would be a waste of paper". All of this occurred in the presence of the representative to Argentina of the UN Development Program, who is an old friend of the family. Under these circumstances, Mrs. Gutierrez went to the main offices of the National Postal and Telegraph Service to send telegrams to the Minister of the Interior, the Chief of Police, the Commanders-in-Chief of the Army and the Air Force, and to you, Mr. President; she was not permitted to send those telegrams because she had no identity card. It was useless to argue that the assailants had taken her documents, along with those of the rest of her family. The friends who were with her showed their identity cards, offering to take responsibility for the text of the telegrams and the identity of the sender; but this was useless as well. Mrs. Gutierrez then returned to the 15th police precinct to lodge a complaint about her stolen documents; this time the police refused to receive her complaint, on the grounds that those who stole or "confiscated" her identity card might have been police. After a long discussion, a complaint for "lost" documents was accepted and with the proper papers, Mrs. Gutierrez was able to return to the telegraph office and send her telegrams.

Simultaneously, the sons of Senator Michelini and friends who accompanied them were subjected to an identical ordeal. Right after the Senator's abductors withdrew from the Hotel Liberty, the concierge, Mr. Mario Procacci, went to lodge a complaint at the first police precinct, located at Lavalle 451. The complaint was refused, because—as he was told—the police had been informed that several "joint operations"

were being carried out in the neighborhood, and this must have been one of them. Mr. Procacci then stated that in any case, he had to lodge a complaint; he was responsible for the hotel during the night and hotel property had been stolen. For a second time, the police refused. Shortly after 9:30 AM, the elder of the two sons who were with Senator Michelini at the time of his abduction appeared at the same police precinct; he attempted to lodge a complaint about his father's abduction and the theft of property belonging to him and to his brother. For a third time, the police refused to receive the complaint. And once again, a complaint regarding stolen or confiscated documents had to be changed to a complaint about "lost" documents before it was acceptable.

By nightfall on May 18, the police had not accepted any official complaints; no police officer had shown up at the scene of either abduction; no federal judge had ordered that any action or investigation be undertaken; no answer had been received to any of the telegrams sent—including the one which was addressed to you, Mr. President; the fingerprints of the criminals were still waiting to be taken, in a country where the fingerprints of every resident—nationals and foreigners alike—are on record in a single, centralized file. Although at the time neither their relatives nor their friends knew it, Zelmor Michelini and Hector Gutierrez Ruiz had only 48 hours to live.

On May 19, when a number of dignitaries in the Argentine police, government and armed forces were informed—incredibly—that neither the police nor the armed forces had participated in the arrests, and that the victims were not in police or military custody, concern for their eventual release began to turn to fear that their situation might be far more serious than was originally thought. At the same time, we were informed indirectly that you, Mr. President, were seriously concerned about the events in question, and that you had ordered an investigation. The Buenos Aires office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees presented a writ of Habeas Corpus to the Argentine courts. Relatives of both victims continued to receive messages of solidarity from public figures the world over; and the Argentine government received from all over the world pleas that humane principles and recognized standards of human rights be respected. By late that night, nobody had appeared to inspect the places where the abductions had occurred; to interrogate the numerous witnesses; to look for clues and material evidence of the identity of the abductors; to take the fingerprints they had left. Had anyone with authority undertaken to check those fingerprints, the assailants could have been identified in less than an hour and our companions rescued. At the time, none of us knew what we now know: Hector Gutierrez Ruiz and Zelmor Michelini were still alive, but they had only 24 hours left to live. Their families had not received answers to any of the telegrams they had sent to the authorities. (According to a receipt issued by the National Postal and Telegraph Service, you had received yours, Mr. President, at 7:30 PM on the previous day).

On May 20, there seemed to be no new developments, except for the increasing anguish of all—both relatives and Argentine and Uruguayan friends who were following the events in Buenos Aires, and those who continued to send their moving expressions of solidarity from abroad. A reliable and confidential source had informed us that our two countrymen were in custody in a military unit. But all official sources persisted in denying any knowledge of the facts. In the evening, Minister of Defense Brigadier Major (RE) José María Klix, made—first to one foreign correspondent and then to another—the incredible statement to which I referred earlier in this letter: "It was a Uruguayan operation". Then, he added—still more incredibly—"I still don't know if it was official or not". I have not the slightest doubt that the Minister

correctly identified those responsible for instigating, requesting or ordering the abductions and subsequent assassinations; but he was mistaken about the identity of the actual perpetrators. Government officials and dignitaries from all over the world continued to express their concern to the Argentine government. The Uruguayan government still had taken no official or unofficial action on behalf of these two distinguished men, nor had they thought it necessary to even express concern about their fate. The Argentine courts had not seen fit to intervene in any way; they had undertaken no investigation of the circumstances surrounding these serious and public offenses which had caused concern the world over, and which were by then notorious within Argentina, because La Gaceta, the daily for which Senator Michelini worked as an editor, had denounced the abductions repeatedly and demanded an immediate investigation. While the Buenos Aires Herald followed suit, the rest of the press—including major dailies whose owners and editors found refuge in Uruguay in the hour of their own exile—did not. Not a single police officer had arrived at the scenes of the abductions. Nobody had questioned the scores of individuals who saw the assailants; or those who saw the documents with which they identified themselves; or the superintendent from the building on Posadas street whom they questioned at length; or the personnel at the Hotel Liberty; or the elevator operator who took the assailants to the seventh floor; or the relatives of both victims who had the assailants in full view during their hours of anguish. The fingerprints of the assailants were still waiting for someone from the police, the courts, the government, the armed forces to carry out the simple procedure—really almost an administrative task—that might have led to the release of the prisoners. The families had received no answer to their messages—no answer from the Minister of the Interior, the Chief of Police, the Commanders-in-Chief of the Army and the Air Force, and no answer from you, Mr. President. They were not aware that at that very moment, two men who were and are the pride of my country, were being murdered in the disgusting and sordid manner which I will not bother to describe, because you surely know the details, and it would be too painful for me to go through them again.

On May 21, we learned of the communiqué issued by the Press Office of the Executive Branch; this only served to increase our anguish and our concern. It states as follows: "Given the disappearances of journalists during the last few days, which have caused deep concern in many sectors within the nation and abroad—concern which is shared by the Argentine government—Minister of the Interior Brigadier General Albano Harguindeguy has informed us that he has requested a full report on said disappearances. Similarly, even though in certain cases, the corresponding complaints have not been lodged before the Federal Police, he has ordered an exhaustive investigation of the cases, known (to him) by other means". What possible reason could there have been for describing as "disappearances of journalists" the abduction of two of Uruguay's most outstanding political leaders, well-known on both sides of the River Plate? How could it be claimed that in certain cases, the corresponding complaints had not been lodged, when the victims' relatives had done nothing since the abductions occurred but go fruitlessly from one office to another, trying in vain to find someone who would accept their complaints? How could Minister General Harguindeguy not have known that at 7:30 PM on the day of the abductions, telegrams sent by relatives of both victims had been delivered to his office, and that under Argentine law, complaints about (such) offenses are not subject to any formalities? Why was it not recognized that the police and the courts are obliged to intervene without official complaints in cases where serious crimes have occurred? Still, at least a Minister had stated publicly for the first time what until then had only been said privately and indirectly: someone was interested in investigating. The next few hours proved this to be a lie: by nightfall, neither the police nor officials of the courts had appeared; everyone knew then that no one would ever come to collect the evidence, and that the fate of our companions was in the hands

of God. We heard that some newspapers and news agencies had received communiqués, presumably from guerrilla organizations, stating that the bodies of our countrymen were to be found in a car, at a specified place in the city. When the police were consulted, this information was categorically denied; but nobody believed anything the Police said any more. Relatives and friends saw their hopes diminish by the hour; but they were still unaware that Zelmor Michelini and Hector Gutierrez Ruiz had been murdered twenty-four hours earlier, and that their bodies had been "found" by the police.

On Saturday, May 22, the Gutierrez Ruiz family waited all day on Posadas street, while the Michelini family waited at the Hotel Liberty, for the investigators whose arrival had been announced by Minister General Harguindeguy. When they failed to arrive, Margarita, one of the Michelini daughters, and Mrs. Gutierrez Ruiz appeared with witnesses before Notary Public Cesar J. Ceriani Cernadas and prepared two separate documents (Actas de Manifestación, Protesta y Notificación) in which they attested to the facts and requested that the Minister of the Interior be notified formally of the same. Having prepared the notifications, Mr. Ceriani took them that afternoon to the Ministry of the Interior; the officials in charge at the Ministry refused to accept them, on the grounds that "there were no office hours on Saturdays"; they told Mr. Ceriani to return the following Monday.

Additionally, Mrs. Gutierrez Ruiz sent three telegrams. Two of them, identically worded, were sent to the Minister of the Interior and to you, Mr. President; in them, after describing once more the events in question, she stated:

"Hector Gutierrez Ruiz is the Speaker of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies and a leader of the National Party, a traditional political party which was born with the nation itself. Reliving an episode recurrent throughout the history of the River Plate, our family was obliged by political developments to move to Argentina in June 1973; since then we have tried to reciprocate for the hospitality of the Argentine nation by complying strictly with our moral obligation not to take part in any way in the political life of the country which gave us shelter. In my name and in those of my five children, I beg you, Mr. President, to authorize a rapid clarification of the facts which will make it possible for the head of our household to rejoin his family."

At the same time, the wife of our companion sent a telegram to your wife, Mr. President. It said the following: "Mrs. Alicia Raquel Hartridge de Videla. Salcarce 50. I beg you to intercede (on our behalf) so that every effort will be made to facilitate the return of Hector Gutierrez Ruiz, Speaker of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies, to his wife, his five children and the Christian home that we have maintained intact in the midst of political turmoil, under the protection afforded us by your generous Argentine hospitality. This telegram is not intended to be public. Please God that we may soon express our lifelong gratitude for your assistance. Many thanks. Matilde Rodriguez Larreta de Gutierrez Ruiz".

When Mrs. Gutierrez returned home after tending to the above-mentioned affairs, her friends were waiting to tell her that the body of her murdered husband had been found. For two hours, all the city radio stations had been broadcasting a communiqué issued by the Federal Police, informing the public of the "discovery" of the bodies. You did not find it necessary to answer any of the messages which you received. No authority or member of your government expressed grief or presented condolences to the relatives of these distinguished guests of the Argentine Republic, treacherously murdered on your soil. Nobody even thought of notifying the families of the victims, so that they could be spared the anguish of receiving the news in the street, reading the headlines or listening to the radio. The only response they got from you, Mr. President, was notification that the last telegram sent you was finally delivered on May 24, and that your wife, Sir, refused to receive the one

addressed to her.

I have tried to refrain from using adjectives until now; but nobody would hesitate to describe as "repulsive" the communiqué issued by the Federal Police. It states the following: "The Argentine Federal Police announces that yesterday (May 21), at 9:20 PM, an abandoned red Torino Coupé was discovered at the intersection of Perito Moreno and Bellepiane. In its interior, was the body of an individual of masculine sex, and upon inspection of the trunk, three more bodies were found, one female, and two more males. Examination of the bodies permitted identification of three of them as: Zelmaz Michelini, Hector Gutierrez Ruiz and Rosario del Carmen Barredo de Schroeder; the names of the victims coincided with those mentioned in pamphlets found in the interior of the vehicle, in which a subversive organization claimed responsibility for the crimes. The bodies were handcuffed and bore numerous bullet-wounds. Participating in the discovery were officials from the 40th precinct, under the jurisdiction of Judge Dr. Alfredo Marquardt (Jefe Nacional de Primera Instancia en lo Criminal y Correccional), with the assistance of Doctor Roberto Preller. A tribunal was formed at the scene and the appropriate legal measures taken". As you can see, the murderers attempted to attribute their crimes to armed subversives, and to link the dead men to subversive groups. I will not even bother to contemplate such a possibility: not one decent Uruguayan or Argentine would ever believe it; perhaps for that very reason, nobody, not even the authors of the communiqué, chose to dwell on the matter.

At present, two days after the above-cited communiqué was issued and now that the funeral vigils for our dear ones have ended, we still do not know what the "appropriate legal measures" ordered by Federal Judge Dr. Marquardt might be; for no police or court officials have yet arrived--and we know that none ever will--to take any "measures" or to carry out either the "exhaustive investigation" supposedly initiated by Minister General Harguindeguy or the one which you, Mr. President, announced that you had ordered. How much simpler and quicker it turned out to be to take fingerprints and identify the victims than it was to take those of their murderers or--in the space of three long days--to save human lives! But I suppose, Mr. President, that none of that matters much any more: nobody can bring our companions back to life; and you, Sir, and I and everyone else know where their murderers are.

I do not wish to bother you any longer, or to distract you from more weighty concerns. For that reason, I will not describe the enormous difficulties that had to be overcome before we could recover the bodies of our loved ones; or the sudden sense of duty that overcame the Federal Judge, who did in fact take "measures", not to apprehend the murderers but to keep the bodies in custody instead of releasing them to their next of kin, even after the autopsies had been completed; or the influence that had to be used and the steps that had to be taken in order to obtain release of the bodies. Nor do I think it necessary to describe in detail the aggressive and base treatment accorded the relatives of the victims at the police stations; and the threats which they received from the police, who told them that if they dared to hold funeral vigils, all those who came to pay their respects would be filmed to facilitate their identification.

But I do want to say something about the other two Uruguayans whose bodies were "found" alongside those of our two friends. I did not know them. It is said that they belonged to a guerrilla organization; I have no way of knowing whether that is true or not. But even if it were true, it seems obvious that they were murdered only as a means of linking our two friends with that guerrilla organization. And I wonder if this is not the most disgusting aspect of the whole sordid affair: two human lives were taken for the sole purpose of dressing up a lie. Please God that the wrath of their murderers^{at} least will respect the lives of their missing children.

The Argentine police went to look for me at my home a few hours ago. I have not slept there for several nights; and, as I said, I am about to seek asylum in the Embassy of a country whose government respects itself, and for that reason respects and protects human life. When the hour of your own exile comes—as you can be sure it will, General Videla—if you seek refuge in Uruguay, a Uruguay whose destiny will once again be in the hands of its people, we will receive you without warmth and without affection; but we will guarantee you the protection which you denied to those whose death we mourn today.



Wilson Ferreira Aldunate